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NOFORN/NOCONTRACT/ORCON

International Narcotics Developments

STAFF NOTES

~~Secret~~ 204

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: AUG 2001

PS SNIE 77-014
6 July 1977

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS DEVELOPMENTS

6 July 1977

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This publication is prepared by analysts in the Directorate of Intelligence for specialists in the Washington community who are interested in international narcotics matters. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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BOLIVIA: Communist Party Cocaine Trafficking

The pro-Chinese Communist Party of Bolivia (PCB/C) is trafficking in cocaine to finance its activities and has used this means to secure funds for at least two years, smuggling cocaine from Bolivia into Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Paraguay. Party members serve as couriers for the narcotics and generally travel via bus or train to their destination. A favorite method of concealing the cocaine is to hide it in specially modified thermos bottles of several liters capacity that allow a small amount of liquid to cover the drug compartment.

In August and December 1976, several shipments of about 1.5 kilograms of cocaine were smuggled into Buenos Aires via Villazon, Bolivia, and sold for approximately $15,000 each. In mid-May 1977 four thermos bottles were used to transport cocaine to Matarani, Peru, entering the country through Desaguadero. Since these were similar to the bottles used in the shipments to Argentina, it is likely that the amount of the drug was approximately the same as that in the Buenos Aires sales. Money from both transactions was turned over to the deputy leader of the PCB/C in Oruro, Bolivia.

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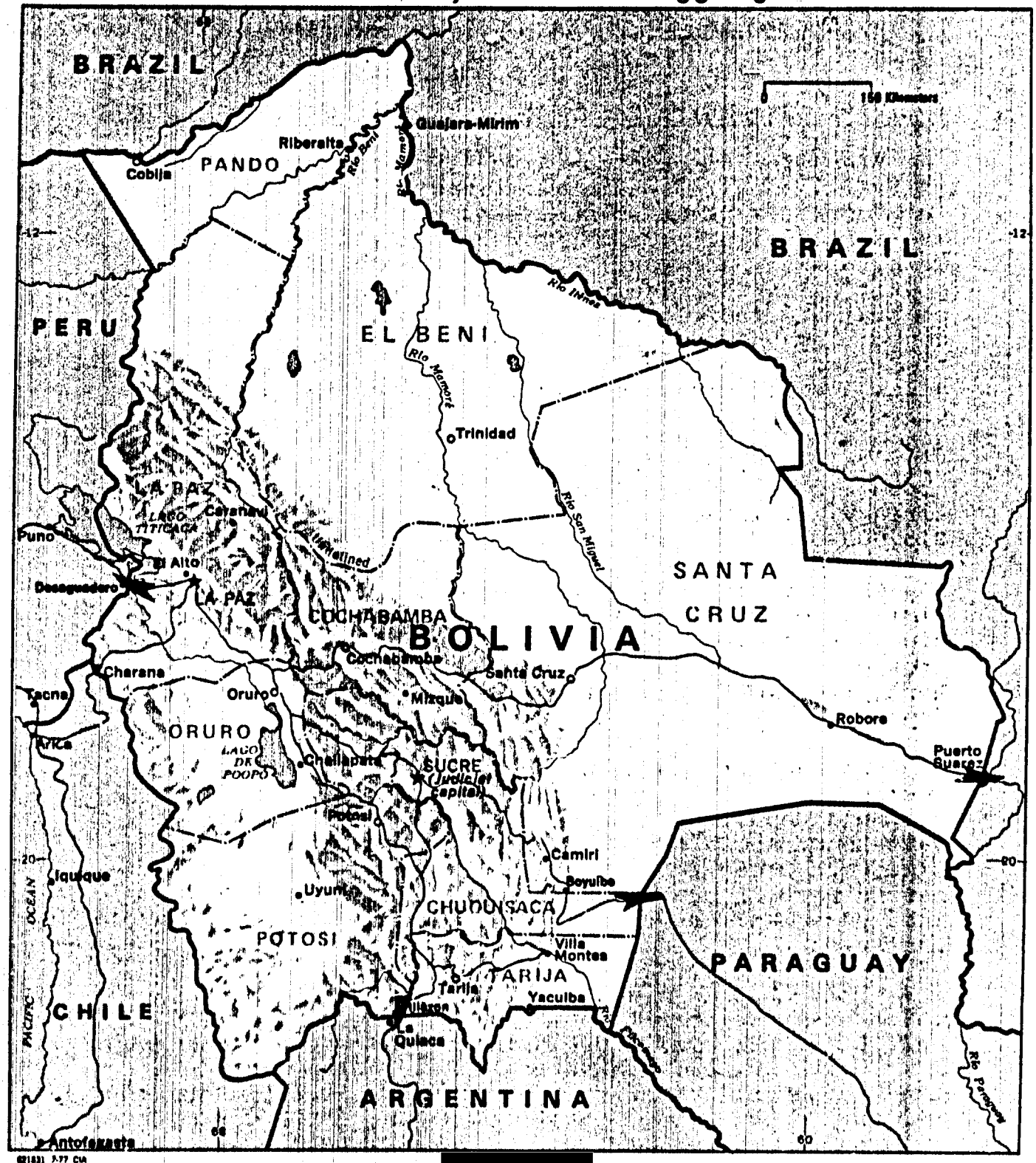
The PCB/C is a small, violence-prone organization which has a membership of approximately 50 in Bolivia and 50 in exile in Europe. In the past it has cooperated with the Bolivian National Liberation Army (ELN), the Uruguayan Tupamaros, and the international Revolutionary Coordinating Council (JCR). The PCB/C also has

Bolivian Communist Party Cocaine Smuggling Routes



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carried out a limited number of terrorist acts on its own, including bombings and armed robberies. While the activities of the PCB/C have been somewhat overshadowed by those of the better known ELN, it has a potential to wage a significant terrorist campaign.

The relative affluence the party is realizing from narcotics trafficking could tempt the hard-line leadership to expand the party and its anti-government program.

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